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The Settlement of Jews
in the Lower Ohio Valley

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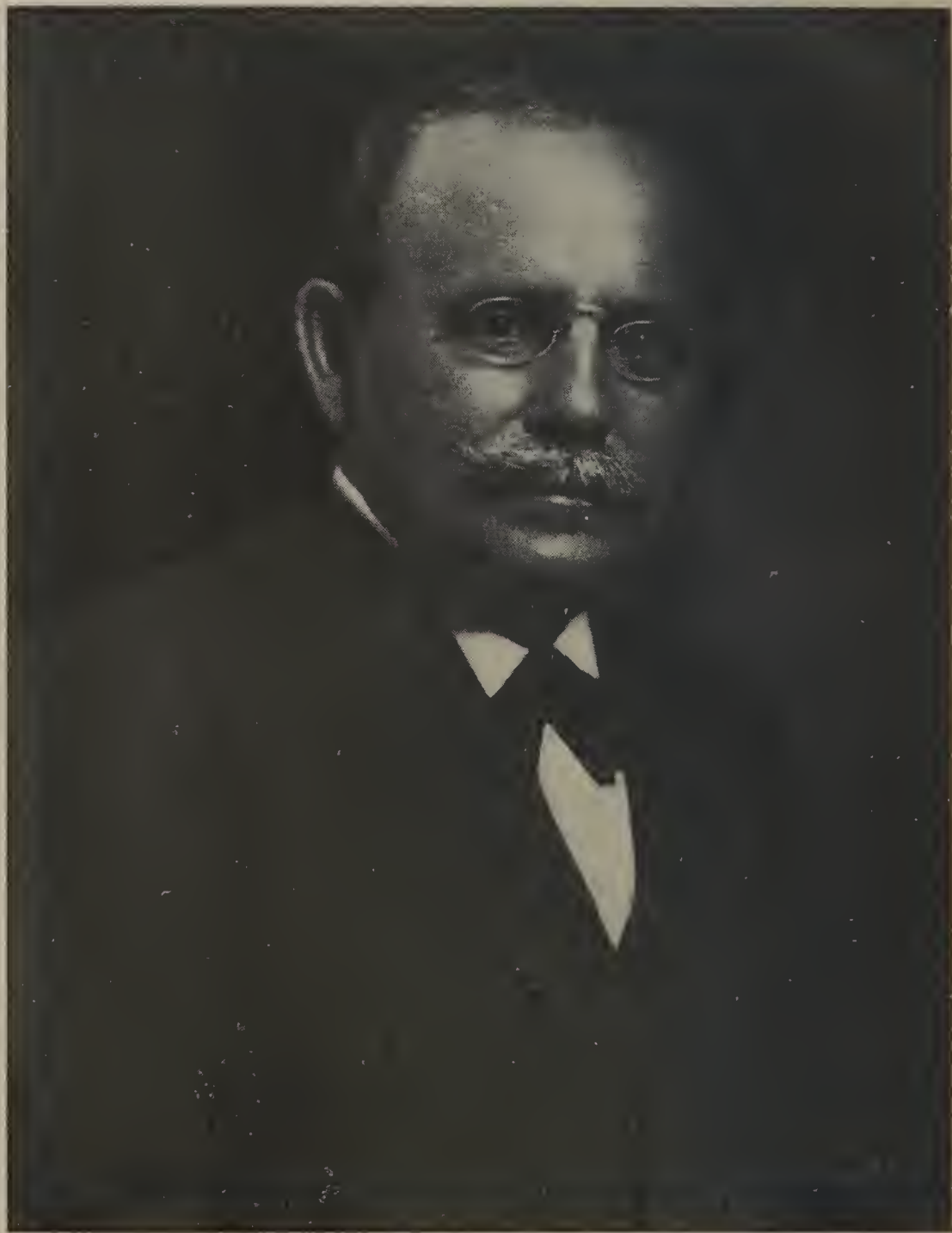
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“ One To-day is worth two To-morrows.”



John W. Williams

HISTORY
of the
SETTLEMENT OF JEWS IN
PADUCAH
and the
LOWER OHIO VALLEY

by
ISAAC W. BERNHEIM

*Published for Temple Israel by Reason of
the Generosity of Mr. Joseph L. Friedman*

Paducah, Ky., July 1, 1912

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NOTE.

My Dear Mr. Benedict :

The History of the Settlement of Jews in Paducah and in the Lower Ohio Valley has received its finishing touches and is being forwarded by mail to your address. Kindly present it, with my best wishes, to the Jewish Congregation, whose president I had the honor to be many, many years ago. The old town and its kindly people have ever occupied a soft spot in my memory, and if the little sketch — unvarnished and truthful — pleases them and fills a useful place in the local history, I shall feel not only gratified, but amply compensated for the many hours of my leisure time in compiling it.

Very truly yours,

I. W. BERNHEIM.

PREFACE.

The history of the Jews of this country is very largely the history of the various congregations. For it was around them that the activities of the Jews centered, and it was in the congregational life that they expressed themselves best and most distinctively. An account of the beginnings and growth of any congregation, no matter how small and seemingly insignificant it may be, constitutes therefore a contribution, even though an humble one, to the internal history of the Jews of the land. Moreover, such a record of the efforts and strivings of the early Jewish settlers who were the founders of most of our congregations, the story of their loyalty to, and their enthusiasm for, their ancestral faith under the most trying and difficult circumstances cannot but be an inspiration unto us and future generations. None can read such a narrative without being stirred thereby and without being strengthened and confirmed in his zeal and devotion to that faith for which our fathers were ever ready to make sacrifice.

For this account of the Paducah Congregation and of the Jewish communities along the Lower Ohio Valley we are indebted to Mr. I. W. Bernheim, for many years a resident of Paducah, but now of Louisville, Ky. The career of I. W. Bernheim is typical of that of many Jews who, a generation or more ago, sought these shores

in the hope of enjoying more liberty and of finding greater opportunities. Born in Schmieheim, Baden, Germany, November 4, 1848, he came to this country April 8, 1867, with the scantiest of capital. After peddling for about a year in the state of Pennsylvania he came to Paducah, May 7, 1868. Here he engaged in business and gradually grew in wealth and influence. In 1874 he married Miss Amanda Uri. In 1888 he removed to Louisville, where he is to-day one of its most influential citizens, and because of his great interest in things Jewish and his readiness to contribute of his time and means to the cause of Jews and Judaism he has won for himself a prominent place in American Jewry.

It is our hope that this history of the struggles and achievements of a small and humble section of Jews in this land will be of interest to many and that it will tend to quicken and keep alive a love and devotion for Israel's faith in the hearts of their descendants.

RABBI MEYER LOVITCH.

Paducah, Ky.,

May 28, 1912.

THE EARLY DAYS.

THE EARLY DAYS.

The settlement of Jews in the Lower Ohio Valley is practically the story of the South German Immigration movement that had its beginning in the years previous to 1840. It gradually increased for over three decades — its greatest development ending with the victorious prosecution on the part of Germany, of the French War in 1870. Thereafter the Fatherland afforded better chances of profitable employment. How much this and other causes, such as a larger measure of religious and political freedom, are responsible for the gradual decrease and almost total extinction of the German Immigration movement, is not within the domain of the author, whose task it is to trace briefly the settlement of men of the Jewish Faith on the banks of the Lower Ohio. Suffice it to say that

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co-religionists, principally from Bavaria, Baden, Hechingen-Hohenzollern and other South German States, were found scattered along the Lower Ohio and its tributaries many years before 1850.

These men, mostly young and unmarried, found their way to the small trading posts via New York or Philadelphia, where, on their arrival in this country, they found temporary shelter under the hospitable roof of some more fortunate relative or countryman where opportunity was offered to learn the first rudiments of the English Language. Ambitious to improve their material condition — not unlike many other human beings, who look for the best farthest from home — they immigrated westward, crossing the Allegheny Mountains by stage coaches and going thence from Pittsburg by steamboat to Cincinnati and Louisville.

In these two cities respectable beginnings had successfully been made in

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the formation of Jewish Congregations and it is here that new connections were formed for commercial as well as social intercourse. Credit was cheerfully extended by their co-religionists who already, in that early period, conducted prosperous wholesale establishments. In those days it required neither references nor reports from Dun and Bradstreet to establish a modest line of credit. A good character, combined with health, industry and capacity were all the requisites necessary. Thus we find these hardy pioneers either as peddlers, or as store-keepers, scattered along the shores of the Lower Ohio, Green, Tennessee and Cumberland Rivers. Evansville, Ind., had a small but growing colony of Jews, and scattered settlements can be traced all the way to Cairo, Ill., and Hickman, Ky.

As early as 1840, Owensboro, Ky., had two respected citizens of our faith, in Marcus Suntheimer and Samuel Moise.

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Max Kohn, Phillip Rothschild, Henry Mendel, Ernest Weil, Abraham Hirsch, Simon Greenbaum, settled there between 1850 and 1860.

Henderson, Ky., had among its early settlers H. Schlesinger, Koltinsky Brothers, Israel Heyman, Solomon Oberdorfer, Abraham Mann, B. Baum, Elias Oberdorfer, M. Heilbronner.

Hartford, Ohio County, Ky., near Owensboro, a little village then as now, counted among its pioneer merchants before the Civil War, Mr. Gabriel Netter, a gallant and ill-fated soldier, of whom you shall read more later on.

Madisonville, Hopkins County, Ky., had, about 1842 and for many years thereafter, as its largest mercantile establishment that of the Lichten Brothers. The firm consisted of Charles, Adolph and Morris Lichten. Shortly before the outbreak of the war, they moved to Louisville, Ky., where they

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successfully conducted a wholesale clothing business for many years.

Mt. Vernon, Ind., counted Moses and Daniel Rosenbaum, Levi Hartung, David and Louis Mendel, Sampson Oberdorfer, Emanuel Wolf among its merchants as early as 1854.

The Jewish roster in other nearby communities was:

Golconda, Ill.—Morris Kahn.

Marion, Crittenden County, Ky.—Isaac and Alexander Levy, Selligman Ullman.

Metropolis, Ill.—Bernard Baer and Lehman Tannhauser.

Cairo, Ill.—Isaac Farnbaker and Isaac Walter.

Hickman, Ky.—Joseph and Moses Amberg, Abraham Goodheart.

Dycusburg, Ky., on the Cumberland River — Moses Bloom.

Eddyville, Ky., on the Cumberland River—Leopold and Simon Block.

Clarksville, Tenn., on the Cumber-

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land River — B. Prosser, I. Lyons and G. A. Roth.

Florence, Ala., on the Tennessee River — Alexander W. Falk.

Undoubtedly other co-religionists were located in the different little settlements on the banks of the rivers or in towns adjacent thereto. They received constant accessions from their old homes. Among others, I recall Gustav Ellenbogen, who came to Smithland about the time of the outbreak of the Civil War. Before he had had time to learn the English language he joined the Confederate Army and fought through the war, returning to Paducah a ragged veteran in 1865.

*PADUCAH A SANCTUARY
OF ISRAEL.*

PADUCAH A SANCTUARY OF ISRAEL.

Paducah, that friendly town on the banks of the Ohio River, was for many years previous to the war overshadowed in importance as a shipping and commercial town by Smithland, its neighbor. If the war had not intervened and river navigation had not been superceded by the railroads, it might have been, indeed, to-day my duty to write the history of the beginnings of the Jewish congregation in Smithland, rather than that of the one in Paducah. The former is located at the junction of the Cumberland and Ohio Rivers; it is beautifully elevated, has a fine harbor, and is surrounded by an excellent agricultural country. It counted, in the early fifties, among its prominent merchants, Benjamin Weille, Samuel Drey-

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fuss, M. Livingston, Leopold Levy, Samson Rosenfield, Isaac and Jacob Eckstein and Samuel Rexinger. The last, soon after the commencement of the Civil War, joined the Federal Army as a private and by bravery on the field of battle rose to the rank of captain. When hostilities ceased, he settled in Clarksville, Tenn., and filled the office of postmaster for many years.

Paducah labored under many serious disadvantages, for the country back of it was poor and unproductive. Its location was flat and not susceptible to proper drainage, hence it was subject to malaria and kindred diseases. Besides, its few inhabitants could not compare at all favorably in wealth with those of the neighboring town, which sheltered men of capacity and owners of many slaves.

Paducah's earliest settlers of the Jewish faith consisted of Morris and Abraham Uri, D. Loewenstein and Leopold Klaw. They conducted small

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country stores on what was called Front street, in a row of frame buildings of inferior character, which were destroyed by fire in 1851, when nearly every store house in the town was burned down. Undaunted by this calamity, its citizens commenced to rebuild on a more substantial scale. A year or two after the fire, when a charter was procured for a company to build a railroad from Paducah to tap the Mobile and Ohio Railroad at, or near, Union City, Tenn., sixty odd miles distant, it quickly grasped the opportunity and advantages that the railroad bid fair to bestow. New business houses went up, real estate advanced and the business of Paducah increased largely thereafter. We find a year or two before the Civil War — about 1859 — a considerable number of our co-religionists occupying places of increasing prominence in the growing towns.

Williams' Paducah City Directory for 1859 records the following inhabi-

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tants and firms of the Jewish faith:

“ Isaac Bodenheimer.

“ Greenbaum & Kaskel, composed of Solomon Greenbaum and Ceasar Kaskel.

“ Louis Harris.

“ Nathan Kahn.

“ Klaw & Bloomgard, composed of Leopold Klaw and Jos. Bloomgard.

“ H. Levy.

“ Meyer Lieber.

“ Loeb & Wile, composed of Reuben Loeb and Jos. Wile.

“ D. Lowenstein.

“ D. Wolff & Bro., composed of Daniel, Marcus and Alexander Wolff.

“ C. Frank & Co., composed of Chas. Frank, Simon Goldsmith and Abraham Goldsmith.”

Mr. Ceasar Kaskel left Paducah during the war, and founded the well-known Kaskel haberdashery store on Fifth Avenue, New York, which still continues under that name.

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Mr. Leo. Klaw was the father of two sons and one daughter, all born in Paducah. Mr. Marc Klaw, the oldest son, perhaps the first male child of the Jewish faith born in Paducah, is now at the head of the theatrical syndicate of Klaw & Erlanger, of New York, and is a factor in the American Drama.

Reuben Loeb later formed a partnership with Moses Bloom, under the firm name of Loeb & Bloom.

Mr. Joseph Wile returned to Germany at the outbreak of the war.

D. Wolff & Bro. became the successors of Morris Uri, who located in Louisville in 1863 and who re-entered business in Paducah in 1870, where he died in 1872. The "Wolff boys," as they were called by many Paducah people, returned to Germany soon after the close of the war.

*THE BEGINNING OF COM-
MUNAL LIFE.*

THE BEGINNING OF COMMUNAL LIFE.

Jewish communal life took form in 1859, when "Chevra Yeshurum Burial Society" was organized and a small parcel of land for a cemetery was acquired on what was then called the Clinton Road, about four miles from the town limit. The deed to this property was only recorded in 1864. The delay was no doubt caused by the Civil War. This small area has since been enlarged by subsequent purchases until now it has, with the aid of the landscape gardener, been converted into an attractive and well-kept City of the Dead. The society was later chartered by the State Legislature under an act approved February 20th, 1864. A. Goldsmith, M. Uri, C. Frank and D. Wolff are named in the instrument as the incorporators.

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Paducah steadily maintained its growth. The manufacturing interests multiplied. Two banks, one of which had a capital of over \$1,000,000, were ably and conservatively managed. Gas works were constructed. Wholesale houses flourished and did a large volume of trade. The New Orleans and Ohio Railroad was in course of construction. In short, Paducah basked in the sunshine of prosperity and rightly looked forward to still better and larger things in the future, when the dread tocsin of Civil War was heard from afar.

As its echoes resounded from mountain to hill top and reverberated from valley to plain, it reached the bustling, yet peaceful city of Paducah. It is within the province of the author to describe the baneful result of that sad period only in so far as it affected the fortune and well-being of this little community of co-religionists. Paducah did not escape the blighting and de-

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structive influence of the great war.

On its outbreak, the tools of the mechanic were laid aside, the hissing steam of the factories was silenced; contracts for building houses were cancelled, and everyone lounged listlessly about the street wondering "what things will come to." About this time, the United States Government, through Secretary of the Treasury Chase, established an embargo on trade and commerce between the loyal and disaffected States. Paducah was the first city in Kentucky to which it applied, though in justice to its citizens it must be recorded that at the outbreak of hostilities it did not count a half-dozen outspoken secessionists.

In September, 1861, General Grant came up from Cairo, Ill., and took possession of Paducah. Years after the war it was related by those who courageously remained in order to protect their property, how men and women

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fled in the wildest consternation to the country, fearing great harm from the Federal soldiers. General Grant at once issued an order proclaiming that he came not to harm them, but to guard and protect them, yet the fact remained that Paducah was promptly converted into a military post and remained a military post from that time to the end of the war. Under the then existing military regulations, the commander of the post exercised complete supervision of the business of the town. Not a pound of freight was allowed to be shipped into the place without his written permission, nor was it lawful to ship a dollar's worth of goods out of the town without a military permit. Trade and commerce flourishes most where least interfered with. It became impossible to carry on business under such unfortunate conditions. The belief prevailed that the trouble would soon blow over, but when months of stress and storm

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lengthened into years, and when finally the Confederate General Forest made his raid into Tennessee and incidentally paid a hurried visit to Paducah in March, 1863, bringing in his train death and destruction, all attempts at orderly, safe and sane municipal government were for the time abandoned. A period of unrest and insecurity took hold of the citizens and chaos prevailed everywhere. Families moved their belongings to places of safety. Stores were closed. Little stocks of merchandise were hurriedly packed and re-shipped to points of greater safety. Dread and apprehension lay like a pall upon the town.

Those in truth were the dark days. What little of communal, social and commercial activity still existed was almost completely suspended, and it was only the surrender at Appomattox in 1865 that brought new hope and courage to its people and again revived the firm conviction in the minds of Paducah's citi-

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zens that its destiny to become a large and prosperous center of population had only been delayed by war, and not destroyed.

A JEWISH WAR-TIME HERO.

A JEWISH WAR-TIME HERO.

Yet, out of the travail and despair of those war-time days there was born to Kentucky Judaism an imperishable tradition of valor. The region of the Lower Ohio gave to the Union cause a real hero in the lamented Colonel Gabriel Netter, and I regard it a privilege to be able to record on the pages of this little volume some tribute to his worth as a man and his courage as a soldier.

Colonel Netter was a Frenchman by birth, but a true American by adoption. At the outbreak of the war he was doing a profitable business in Ohio County. All desire for personal or material advancement melted under the swift rush of his patriotism. He enlisted as a private and rose to be colonel.

He had spent some time at Evansville, Indiana, and his friends and fellow

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citizens held him in such admiration that they presented him with a sword and sash. Fortunately, I have the correspondence which relates to this testimonial, and I reproduce it.

The letter which preceded the gift is as follows :

Evansville, Ind., Aug., '62.
Col. Gabriel Netter,
Hartford, Ky.

Sir :—

Some of your old friends and citizens of Evansville, appreciating your services and approving your courage and zeal in the cause of our country, desire to present you a sword and sash accompanying this letter. Although but a slight testimonial, they feel assured you will prize it and will continue to persevere in the prosecution of the glorious undertaking until the last of our country's enemies shall be put down.

You will, then, accept this token of their approbation for past services and assurance of kind regards.

With best wishes for future success, I have the honor to be,

Your obedient servant,
W. E. HOLLINGSWORTH,
Col. 2d Indiana Legion.

Nothing could have been more char-

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acteristic of this man than his response,
which reads :

Headquarters Netter Battallion,
Hartford, Ky., Aug. 10th, 1862.

Col. W. E. Hollingsworth,
Com'd'ing 2d Ind. Legion,
Evansville, Ind.

Colonel:—

The handsome sash, beautiful sword, and so very kind letter, presented to me by yourself and others of your true, loyal and generous townsmen, came all duly to hand to-day.

With my heart only, not with words, can or will I thank you. Such an encouragement from my countrymen is a compliment to be remembered to the last.

May God grant me to show and prove myself worthy of your generosity and kindness—worthy of taking my humble share in the war for the redemption of our country.

May He grant me, if I fall, to fall with my face to the foe, my last breath expending itself in a kiss to the fine blade you presented me with, my last prayer to be listened to by the Almighty, for the speedy success of our noble and holy cause.

Believe me, sir, forever,

Your true friend,

GABRIEL NETTER,

Lt. Col. Comm'g.

P. S.—To my friends, please be patient. I have got a great deal to contend with. I was

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sent to this place without a man or a gun and have been much neglected since ; but I will get ready, by the by, nevertheless.

G. N.

For some measure of Colonel Netter as an old comrade saw him, and which is perhaps better than any that I could pay, I am indebted to the following very interesting letter from Mr. C. B. Mitchell, of Owensboro, one of the few surviving members of the Netter Battalion :

Owensboro, Ky., Sept. 11th, 1911.

I. W. Bernheim,

Louisville, Ky.

Dear Sir:—

Replying further and more at length to your favor of the 2nd inst. making inquiries in regard to the character and life of Colonel Gabriel Netter, and especially his short but brilliant military career, I will say that I served under him but a brief time, but during that time, as short as it was, I had an exceptionally good opportunity to learn a good deal about the man, and the more I saw of him and the better I knew him, the more I admired him, and it affords me a great deal of pleasure to be permitted to offer my humble tribute to his memory.

I have heard him spoken of as “A little Dutchman,” by way of derision, but if I am correctly informed, he was a French Jew. In

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this I may be mistaken, but I do not think that I am. But whether French or German, he was an honor to his race and to the country that gave him birth.

He was rather under the medium size, probably about five feet six inches in height, and weighed about one hundred and forty to one hundred and fifty pounds, but well formed and well proportioned; light complexion and of fine personal appearance, and of very pleasing address, courteous and affable in his manner and as polite as the proverbial French dancing master. Gentle as a lamb, he was as brave as a lion.

I was told that prior to the war he was selling goods at Cromwell, Ohio county, Ky., but the first I knew of him was when he recruited a company and went into the army as a captain in the Twenty-sixth Kentucky Infantry, which was raised and mustered into the service at Owensboro, Ky., some time in the fall of 1861.

While serving with that regiment, he distinguished himself to such an extent; that some time early in the summer of 1862 he was commissioned as lieutenant-colonel of the Fifteenth Kentucky Cavalry, and was authorized by the Governor to recruit a regiment to be called the Thirty-fourth Kentucky Mounted Infantry. He first established his camp at Hartford, but soon afterwards removed his headquarters to Owensboro, where I enlisted with him on the 15th day of August, 1862.

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I had formed an opinion, from what I had heard of him, that he was a reckless dare-devil, and hesitated somewhat to enroll myself under his standard, but a recruiting officer who wished me to join his company insisted that I had misjudged the colonel, and at his suggestion I visited the camp and was introduced to Colonel Netter and conversed with him and heard him talking to others and soon became convinced that, although he was a man of undoubted courage, he was also a man of discretion and sound judgment, and would not needlessly expose his men or make a move unless he saw that there was something to be gained by it.

On that eventful morning of September 19th, 1862, a very heavy fog covered the earth, and no object was visible except at a very short distance. We were camped at the fair grounds, about three-fourths of a mile west of the town, and probably about one-fourth of a mile from the Ohio river. At a very early hour in the morning, say about 6:30, a Union man who lived near the western limits of the town, favored by the fog, came breathlessly into camp and informed us that the town was full of rebels, that there was a whole regiment of them had possession of the town. They had traveled all night and had certainly taken us by surprise.

Of course, we expected a fight, and while we were making the necessary preparations, a young negro about eighteen years of age, who had formerly been in my employ, made his way into camp and hunted me up and told me he had

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overheard a conversation between some of the rebel soldiers, from which he learned that they had divided their forces and that about one-half of them occupied a strip of woods west of our camp, expecting that our colonel would immediately advance to engage the enemy in town, and then they would come in, take possession of the camp and appropriate or destroy all of the government property there, which was sufficient to equip a whole regiment. I took the negro to my captain and he took him to the colonel, who, after questioning him closely, came to the conclusion that the negro was probably telling the truth, and that at any rate he would investigate the matter and find out for himself, and proceeded to make his plans accordingly.

He had probably about four hundred and fifty men enlisted at this time, but they were scattered all over the surrounding country recruiting, and there was not to exceed two hundred and fifty men in camp. He had one piece of artillery (a six-pound brass gun), which he left with our company of about twenty-five men, besides the gun squad, to watch the town, and he started down the Dublin lane toward the river, with about two hundred men. He only went a short distance when he halted his men and returned to give some final instructions to the captain commanding our company. By this time the fog had disappeared, and while he was still engaged in giving his orders to our captain, a rebel officer was seen approaching from the direction of the town bearing a flag of truce.

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He was halted by the pickets who were stationed a short distance up the road toward town. When the attention of the colonel was called to him, he motioned for the pickets to pass him in and advanced a short distance to meet him. After a few words had passed between them unheard by us, he came back to us accompanied by the rebel officer and addressing us in a tone of voice as gentle as though he was speaking to a company of ladies, said :

“ Boys, this officer comes with a flag of truce from Lieutenat-colonel Martin, who, with eight hundred *guerillas*, has possession of the town and demands of me a surrender of all of my command and of all of the government property in my possession. I want you to hear my answer.”

He then turned facing the rebel officer, and, with a graceful wave of hand, pointed towards the ground, and said :

“ NEVER, till the last man of us is laid low in the dust.”

He then turned to us, and in the same mild and gentle tone of voice inquired : “ Boys, does my answer suit you ? ”

Such was the confidence that we had in our brave young commander, that there was nothing else for us to do but to do just what we did, and that was to swing our caps in the air and respond with three hearty and lusty cheers. The rebel officer seemed to be deeply impressed by the scene, for there was no acting in this. It was all very serious, sober reality. We were in the

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presence of possible and probable death, and it proved to be nearer than even any of us anticipated.

The rebel officer remarked, as he prepared to retire: "Colonel, I carry back with me the most profound respect for you and your brave men." With a parting salute, he returned to deliver his message to his chief, and the colonel joined his command that had been waiting for him in the lane. He moved on to the river, then down the river road a short distance, over the fence into a corn field, where he met the enemy, and a lively skirmish ensued. In less than an hour from the time that he refused to surrender, he was brought back to camp a lifeless corpse.

Thus died at the early age of twenty-six one of the most promising young men that the war thus far had developed.

Had he lived through the war, I doubt not but that his splendid talents and military genius would have received proper recognition, and a brigadier's, if not a major general's commission, would have been his reward before the peace was finally secured. His name and fame would have been placed along side of such men as Sheridan, Kilpatrick and Custer.

He was of that race of people that produced a Joshua, a Gideon and a David; and that nationality that claimed a LaFayette among its honored citizens, and gave to the world, in the person of Napoleon, the greatest military genius of all history. And neither Jew nor Frenchman need ever blush at the sound of the name of GABRIEL NETTER.

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He had a married sister living in Evansville, Indiana, who was at once notified of his death. Her husband came up on the first boat and took charge of the remains, but only after we had been permitted to pass by the bier, with arms reversed, and take one last and farewell look at the features of our beloved commander. He was laid to rest in the cemetery at Evansville.

Just twenty years after that time, the Federal soldiers of this place received an invitation to visit Evansville and participate in the services incident to Memorial or Decoration Day on May 30th, 1882. Comrade John A. Brown, who had served in the same company with myself, and who, like myself, was a devoted admirer of Colonel Netter, got into communication with the family of the colonel's sister, then a widow, and informed them that a few of the colonel's old soldiers would be down at that time and were desirous of finding his grave, in order that we might honor his memory in a special manner.

When we arrived at Evansville, and were escorted to Evans Hall, where headquarters had been established, we found two of his nieces there waiting to greet us, and who exhibited to us his sword and sash that he had worn while with us in person. They also had with them a photograph picture of him, which afforded us a sad pleasure.

After the general memorial services were concluded, the survivors of the old Netter Battalion were conducted to his grave on a private lot in the cemetery, and after a short address

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by Colonel John H. McHenry, formerly colonel of the Seventeenth Kentucky Infantry, who knew him well and appreciated his worth, we proceeded to place our floral offerings on the mound that marked the place where slept our honored dead. With sad hearts, awakened by the memory of the loss of one whom we loved so well, we silently and reverently took our departure from the hallowed spot and left him alone in his glory.

After his death, his recruits were transferred to and mustered in as part of the Twelfth Kentucky Cavalry, but we still held to the name and were proud to designate ourselves as the "Netter Battalion."

With kindest regards, I remain,

Very truly yours,

C. B. MITCHELL,
One of the "Netter Battalion."

PEACE AND PROSPERITY.

PEACE AND PROSPERITY.

With the dawn of peace came law, order and security. These fundamental requirements of well-ordered society and successful commercial endeavor, stimulated all citizens to renewed efforts to efface the ravages of the previous years. Stores were re-opened and factories were re-established. Many of the old settlers returned, and even the New Orleans and Ohio Railroad, which during the war had had a checkered career, verging on the point of bankruptcy, resumed operations and established a regular tri-weekly train service between Paducah and Union City, Tenn.

Twyman's Paducah City Directory, published in 1866, enumerates the following names of citizens of the Jewish Faith:

A. Aaron

Julius Kahn

Moses Adler

Nathan Kahn

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Moses Bloom	J. W. Kaskell
Isaac Bodenheimer	Meyer Lieber
Louis Bodenheimer	M. Livingston
Henry Dryfuss	R. Loeb
N. Dryfuss	A. Solomon
S. Fels	Joseph Ullman
David Friedman	Meyer Weil
Herman Friedman	Jacob Weil
Julius Friedman	Henry Weil
Abraham Goldsmith	Berthold Weil
Simon Goldsmith	Benjamin Weille
A. Goodheart	Bernard Weil
Louis Harris	F. Wile
Chas. H. Kahn	Joseph Wile
Moses Kahn	Abraham Wolf

Chas. H. Kahn conducted a dry goods store with his brothers, Moses and Julius, and sold out his interest to the latter about 1870, when he emigrated to Texas. He served as chief of the Dallas fire department for several years.

Joseph Ullman, son of Selligman Ullman, came from Marion, Ky., At the outbreak of the war he and his brother

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Jacob joined the Confederate forces. Joseph fought throughout the entire war.

Meyer Weil, a distinguished looking man and fearless to the point of recklessness, conducted, before the war, a flourishing business, first in Wadesboro, Ky., then in partnership with his brothers, Jacob and Henry, in Mayfield, Ky. Shortly before the close of the war they moved to Paducah, where they engaged in the dry goods business. He dissolved partnership with his brothers and became an extensive handler of leaf tobacco. Myer Weil was one of the founders of the First National Bank, and served for many years as one of its directors. During the war he was a staunch Union man, but at the close allied himself with the Democratic Party. He served Paducah with credit and ability as Mayor for eight years. He was elected in 1871 and re-elected in 1877. Later he acted as City Tax Collector, and in 1888 he

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represented McCracken County in the Kentucky Legislature for two terms. He was an intelligent and forceful man, a native of Haigerloch, Germany. He died April 13th, 1891, at the age of sixty-one.

Among the above names I find representatives of all branches of trade, from shoe-maker, tailor and baker to wholesale dealers in dry goods, groceries, whiskies and tobacco. The community enjoyed a very prosperous period immediately after the close of the Civil War, because of its proximity to the States of Tennessee and Alabama, which were practically bare of the necessities, as well as the comforts of life, and consequently, when unrestricted communications were restored, they flocked to Paducah and laid in supplies. Whole families came down the Tennessee and Cumberland Rivers with gold which had not seen the light of day since the beginning of the war. This commercial

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activity brought back refugees who had left during the war, and attracted settlers from other sections of the country, as well as from Europe.

Among those of our co-religionists who settled in the period from 1867 to 1870, I recall from a memory, perhaps somewhat faulty, the following :

Mr. and Mrs. Morris Uri and family.

Mr. Alexander Levy and family.

Mr. Isaac Levy and family.

Henry Burgauer.

Julius Weil.

Isaac W. Bernheim.

Samuel K. Cohn.

Simon Dryfuss.

Nathan Klein and family.

Solomon Marks.

Jacob Marks.

Louis Gross.

Herman and Jacob Wallerstein.

Solomon Kuhn.

Lee Schwab.

Samuel Fels.

Leopold Dryfuss.

Mr. and Mrs. Moses Adler.

THE SETTLEMENT OF JEWS

The old Chevra Yeshurum, like local religious associations of other sects, suffered a lethargic existence during the war. After its close, the reconstruction period kept Jew and Gentile in a high state of excitement. Spiritual endeavor had to await the settlement of questions seriously affecting the civic and economic, as well as the social welfare of the inhabitants.

Not until the fall of 1868 was an effort made to organize for Jewish worship. The first services of New Year and the Day of Atonement were held on the third floor over M. Livingston & Company's dry goods store, at the corner of Market and Broadway (now Second and Broadway). Mr. Livingston was at that time the President of the Chevra, and it was he that auctioned off the seats. The proceeds were used for the purpose of defraying the necessary expenses. One of the main items of expense consisted in the employment of a reader to con-

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duct the services. The traveling reader, I may add, was a peculiar institution, while Judaism was in its formative period in the smaller cities of our land. The applicant for a position almost always styled himself a Rabbi. Upon investigation, he was either found to be an unsuccessful German teacher or an individual who claimed to have attended some Yeshiba in Poland. In some cases the applicant was a foreign clerk, without a job, who had a smattering of Hebrew knowledge. They were a peculiar and none too conscientious lot. In some instances they carried with them a *Shofer* and a *Sefer Thora* — their tools in the trade. About the holidays the woods were full of them and many were the stories related about them. After the holidays they disappeared, eked out a very precarious living, only to reappear again on the scene of action the following year.

*A HOUSE OF WORSHIP
AT LAST.*

A HOUSE OF WORSHIP AT LAST

During the following years (1869 and 1870), the holiday services were conducted in the same place. The Orthodox lines were strictly maintained. Family pews were not tolerated, and the Hebrew language was used exclusively.

The year 1870 saw the organization of the B'nai Brith Lodge. The installation of its first officers was a most interesting function and the banquet prepared by the Jewish ladies in celebration of the event gave the first impetus to the formation of a congregation. A committee of women was shortly thereafter selected. It co-operated most enthusiastically with the committee of men, of which Mr. M. Livingston was chairman, to collect money for the purchase of a lot and for the construction of a modest Synagogue.

THE SETTLEMENT OF JEWS

In March, 1871, the articles of the Chevra Yeshurum Burial Society were amended as follows:

“An Act to Amend the Charter of the Paducah Yeshurum Burial Society.

“Be it Enacted by the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Kentucky:

“1. That section one of an act entitled ‘An Act to Charter the Chevra Yeshurum Burial Society,’ approved February twentieth, eighteen hundred and sixty-four, be and the same is hereby amended by striking out ‘two thousand dollars’ where it occurs and inserting in lieu thereof ‘thirty thousand dollars.’

“2. That said Society may act as a congregation for religious worship, and may hold, use, acquire by gift, devise, grant or purchase such real estate and personal property as may be necessary for their full enjoyment as a burial society and congregation not exceeding in value said thirty thousand dollars, and if any of the present members shall not be willing to remain in the Society under the amended charter they shall have and retain all their rights and privileges to the burying ground as heretofore on paying their pro rata dues of the expense to uphold the burying ground.

“JOHN T. BUNCH,

“Speaker of the House of Representatives.

“G. A. C. HOLT,

“Speaker of the Senate.

“Approved 15th March, 1871.

“By the Governor:

“P. H. LESLIE.

“SAML. B. CHURCHILL,

“Sec’y of State.”

AN AUSPICIOUS DEDICATION.

AN AUSPICIOUS DEDICATION.

The Congregation was formed with Meyer Lieber as its first President and Henry Burgauer as Secretary. Mr. Morris Uri, an ardent, progressive and intelligent man, became the Chairman of the Building Committee. Funds were successfully raised. A piece of ground on Chestnut street, between Clark and Adams (now South Fifth street,) was acquired, and a two-story frame building was erected thereon. The Synagogue was finished and dedicated in September, 1871.

The exercises connected with the dedication of the building were impressive indeed. A procession was formed at the residence of Mr. Lieber, on Court street. At its head marched the venerable Mr. Abraham Goodheart, who carried the Scroll of the Law, followed by

THE SETTLEMENT OF JEWS

the children of the members, the officers of the Congregation, the Building Committee, the Mayor, the City Council, and many of its citizens. It was a gala day for the little town. A Synagogue was a novelty and attracted a large number of people who up to that time had never seen such a house of worship and had but a faint idea of Judaism, its principles and ideals.

Mr. Uri, as Chairman of the Building Committee, handed the keys of the newly-erected Synagogue to the President with a few well-chosen remarks, and the first regular Friday evening services before the beginning of the holidays in 1871 commenced, with a good choir, under the leadership of Reverend Mr. Leon Leopold, who was elected its first Rabbi. It was an auspicious start. Mr. Leopold officiated as Rabbi and teacher of the Sunday-school with zeal and ability, He had served as reader of a Congregation for some years in Mem-

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phis, Tenn., was a man of pleasing appearance, possessed a well-trained tenor voice and applied himself diligently to the work at hand.

The first choir was directed by Miss Purington, as organist, and consisted of Mrs. Henry Weil, Miss Fannie Rabb, Miss Amanda Uri, Messrs. B. Bernheim, Henry Dryfuss and Simon Wolff. Shortly thereafter Miss Maggie McClellan and Miss Fannie Uri became members. Under the leadership of Miss Purington, it soon became recognized as the best musical organization in town, and many were its triumphs during the first years of its existence. The services were conducted along modern reformed lines, although in the formation of the Congregation it required many heated meetings before a majority of its members abandoned Orthodoxy.

The question of family pews almost disrupted the little struggling organization, and when the question of removing

THE SETTLEMENT OF JEWS

hats during Divine Worship 'was raised, it created a perfect storm of opposition. Only the tactful management of Mr. Uri led to an honorable compromise. It was decided that members who conscientiously believed that it was a sin to bare one's head during worship were to have the privilege of keeping their heads covered. To the surprise of the members (it appeared during the first service,) Mr. Abraham Goodheart was the only member who adhered to the Orthodox rule, which he persistently did up to the time of his death.

During the "Feast of Shevuoth" in 1872, the Confirmation exercises and the services connected therewith were very solemn. The choir was at its best and the Rabbi faced an audience that packed the little house of worship. Mr. Leopold was not, and never claimed to be, an educated theologian, but he possessed, along with other qualities, a most retentive memory, and on that occasion

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delivered a very interesting address.

The class confirmed consisted of Miss Bertha Levy, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Alexander Levy; Emil Kahn, son of Mr. and Mrs. Nathan Kahn; Willie Levy, son of Mr. and Mrs. Isaac Levy; Benjamin Weille, son of Mr. and Mrs. Benjamin Weille; Bennie Lieber, son of Mr. and Mrs. M. Lieber, and Sylvan Leopold, son of Rabbi and Mrs. Leopold.

The Confirmation exercises made a deep and lasting impression on the minds of the members of the Congregation. The battle for Reform Judaism had been won and the question of Orthodox Ceremonials, which heretofore had created discussion and trouble, was forever put to rest. The Congregation Kehillah Kodesh Bene Yeshurum, as successor of the Chevra Yeshurum, became an institution firmly established. It had its struggles, financially and otherwise, particularly during the dark days of the panic year, 1872, and the lean years fol-

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lowing thereafter; but, to the credit of the Jews of Paducah be it recorded that the doors of their house of worship have never been closed since its inception, nor has there ever been a period since then that every child of Jewish parents did not have the opportunity to receive instructions in the principles and tenets of their faith. The modest frame building on Fifth street served its purpose well for many years. Its spiritual affairs were creditably administered from 1871 to 1877 by Rev. Leon Leopold; by Rabbi G. Taubenhauß from 1879 to 1880; Rev. G. S. Ensel from 1880 to 1885; Dr. Morris Fluegel from 1885 to 1889; Rev. L. Schrieber 1890 to 1891; Rev. M. Ungerleider 1892 to 1894.

Dr. Morris Fluegel was a native of Roumania; studied in Leipzig, and received his degree as Rabbi in Paris. He was a man of decided ability and high character. He left Paducah in 1889; removed to Baltimore, Md., and devoted

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himself thenceforward to literature. He is the author of a number of works dealing with religious subjects, which received well-deserved recognition in this country and in Europe. He died in Baltimore in 1911, in his 73d year.

The increasing population of Paducah brought about a corresponding increase in the population of the Jewish faith. They had proven their faith in the ultimate destiny of the struggling village and in all modesty it may be claimed that the now beautiful City of Paducah is indebted for its growth and enterprise and importance to no small extent to the enterprise of the merchants and capitalists of our belief.

It is a pleasure, no less than an agreeable duty on the part of the author of this sketch, to testify from personal experience to the harmonious relations which have always existed between Gentile and Jew. Paducah, to this day, has remained a town of the broadest

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democratic principles. All sects mingle on a basis of equality and good will, socially as well as commercially. I hope these good relations may ever remain undisturbed and the friendly city on the beautiful Ohio may prosper and expand until it has attained its still greater growth, of which its humble inhabitants dreamed in the long ago.

TEMPLE ISRAEL.



Temple Israel was incorporated May 24th, 1893, succeeding Kelo Kodesh Bene Yeshurum, which in turn succeeded Paducah Chevra Yeshurum Burial Society, chartered February 20th, 1864. The new Temple was dedicated in 1893. Since then the Jewish community has had a slow but steady growth, and at the present time is more prosperous than ever in its history. Temple Israel has a membership of ninety (90) and Paducah a population of three hundred (300) Jewish souls. Temple Israel is affiliated with the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. The community maintains a relief society, managed by Mr. Mose Simon. The Jews of Paducah are fortunate in that they do not need to expend any money for the local relief of their brethren. They give liberally of their means to local non-Jewish institutions and to National Jewish institutions. Most of our male adults are members of Harmony Lodge I. O. B. B.

YESHURUM, PADUCAH, KY.

YEAR	RABBI	PRESIDENT	SECRETARY
1879*	Rev. G. Taubenhau	M. Bloom	Jos. Blum
1880	Rev. G. Taubenhau	M. Bloom	H. Burgauer
1881	Rev. G. S. Ensel	M. Livingston	H. Burgauer
1882	Rev. G. S. Ensel	Moses Kahn	Morris Epstein
1883	Rev. G. S. Ensel	I. W. Bernheim	Samuel K. Cohn
1884	Rev. G. S. Ensel	M. Kahn	S. I. Levy
1885	Rev. G. S. Ensel	Leo. Friedman†	M. Livingston
1886	Rev. G. S. Ensel	Leo. Friedman	M. Livingston
1887	Rev. G. S. Ensel	Leo. Friedman	M. Livingston
1888	Rev. M. Fluegel	I. W. Bernheim	Samuel K. Cohn
1889	Rev. M. Fluegel	M. Bloom	Samuel K. Cohn
1890	Rev. L. Schreiber	M. Bloom	Samuel K. Cohn
1891	Rev. L. Schreiber	M. Bloom	Samuel K. Cohn
1892	Rev. M. Ungerleider	M. Bloom	Samuel K. Cohn
1893	Rev. M. Ungerleider	M. Bloom	Julius Friedman
1894	Rev. M. Ungerleider	M. Bloom	Julius Friedman
1895‡	Rev. M. Ungerleider	M. Bloom	Julius Friedman
1896	Rev. M. Ungerleider	M. Bloom	Julius Friedman
1897	Rev. M. Ungerleider	M. Bloom	Julius Friedman
1898	Rev. H. G. Enelow	M. Bloom	I. Nauheim
1899	Rev. H. G. Enelow	M. Bloom	I. Nauheim
1900	Rev. G. H. Enelow	M. Bloom	I. Nauheim
1901	Rev. David Alexander	M. Bloom	I. Nauheim
1902	Rev. David Alexander	M. Bloom	I. Nauheim
1903	Rev. David Alexander	M. Bloom	I. Nauheim
1904	Rev. David Alexander	M. Bloom	I. Nauheim
1905	Rev. Meyer Lovitch	M. Bloom	I. Nauheim
1906	Rev. Meyer Lovitch	Sol. Dreyfuss	I. Nauheim
1907	Rev. Meyer Lovitch	Sol. Dreyfuss	I. Nauheim
1908	Rev. Meyer Lovitch	John W. Keiler	I. Nauheim
1909	Rev. Meyer Lovitch	John W. Keiler	I. Nauheim
1910	Rev. Meyer Lovitch	John W. Keiler	Jacob Benedict
1911	Rev. Meyer Lovitch	John W. Keiler	Jacob Benedict
1912	Rev. Meyer Lovitch	H. Wallerstein	Jacob Benedict

*Records prior to 1879 destroyed by fire. Rabbis prior to 1879
Reverends Leopold and Ichenbrun:

†Father of Joseph L. Friedman.

‡Congregation's name reported as Temple Israel.

MEMBERSHIP OF TEMPLE ISRAEL

JULY 1st, 1912.

Ackerman, H.	Keiler, John W.
Anspacher, Abe	Keiler, Leo F.
Baer, Mrs. M.	Klein, Isadore
Benedict, J.	Klein, Jos.
Bright, Mrs. P.	Klein, Mrs. Annie
Biederman, Henry	Laevison, Jos.
Biederman, Jake	Levin, Frank
Biederman, Mrs. A.	Levy, Alfred
Bodenheimer, Mrs. M.	Levy, Alex.
Brown, Reuben	Levy, David
Burgauer, Mrs. R.	Levy, Mrs. Rose W.
Cohn, Ike	Levy, Mrs. Hannah
Cohn, Samuel	Levy, Mrs. Peppie
Cohn, S. K.	Levy, Sam. I.
Dreyfuss, Sam.	Livingston, Abe
Dreyfuss, Sol.	Livingston, Harry
Desberger, D.	Livingston, Mrs. A.
Desberger, Joseph	Loeb, Mrs. R.
Elb, Moses L.	Loeb, Rudolph
Fels, Mrs. Jeanette	Loeb, Sidney
Fels, Samuel	Lookofsky, Mike
Frank, A. L.	Markofsky, Abe
Friedman, Herman	Marks, Moses
Friedman, Joseph L.	Marks, Mrs. Yetta
Friedman, Julius	May, Mrs. Clara
Friedman, Mrs. Louise	Michael, Chas.
Greenbaum, James	Michael, Mike
Harris, Mrs. M.	Michael, Mohr
Herman, Alfred	Muth, Jacob
Hummel, L.	Nauheim, Mrs. Sophia
Kahn, Oscar,	Newman, C. B.

Pearson, Ike	Wallerstein, Jacob
Rosenthal, Mrs. Bessie	Wallerstein, Melvin
Rubel, Louis	Wallerstein, Milton
Rosenfield, S.	Weil, Adolph
Schwab, Moses	Weil, Jacob
Simon, Moses	Weil, Julius
Sloan, L. B.	Weil, Mrs. Belle M.
Stark, Sam	Weil, Mrs. Jeanette
Steinfeld, Dr. M	Weille, Ben.
Solomon, Marcus	Weille, Chas.
Tick, Julius	Weille, James
Tick, S. I.	Weille, Mrs. Jeanette
Wallerstein, Herbert	Wolf, Mrs. Bertha
Wallerstein, Herman	Ullman, Albert

Officers and Board of Directors of Temple Israel 1912-1913.

Herman Wallerstein	-	-	-	President
S. I. Levy	-	-	-	Vice-President
Jacob Wallerstein	-	-	-	Treasurer
J. Benedict	-	-	-	Secretary
Buford Ullman	-	-	-	Warden
Biederman, Jacob	Michael, Mohr			
Friedman, Jos. L.	Nauheim, Mrs. Sophia			
Keiler, John W.	Rubel, Louis			
Livingston, Harry	Simon, Mose			
Loeb, Mrs. Sidney.	Weil, Mrs. Belle M.			
	Weil, Mrs. Julius			

Sabbath-School Teachers.

Miss Aimee Dreyfuss	Miss Florence Loeb
Miss Henrietta Kahn	Mrs. Hannah Levy
Miss Lucille Weil	

Choir.

Mrs. James Gruenebaum,	-	-	Choir Leader
Mrs. F. N. Burns,	-	-	Organist
Mrs. Edgar Lyle	Mr. Emmet S. Bagby		
	Mr. Slavic Mall		

Rabbi

MEYER LOVITCH

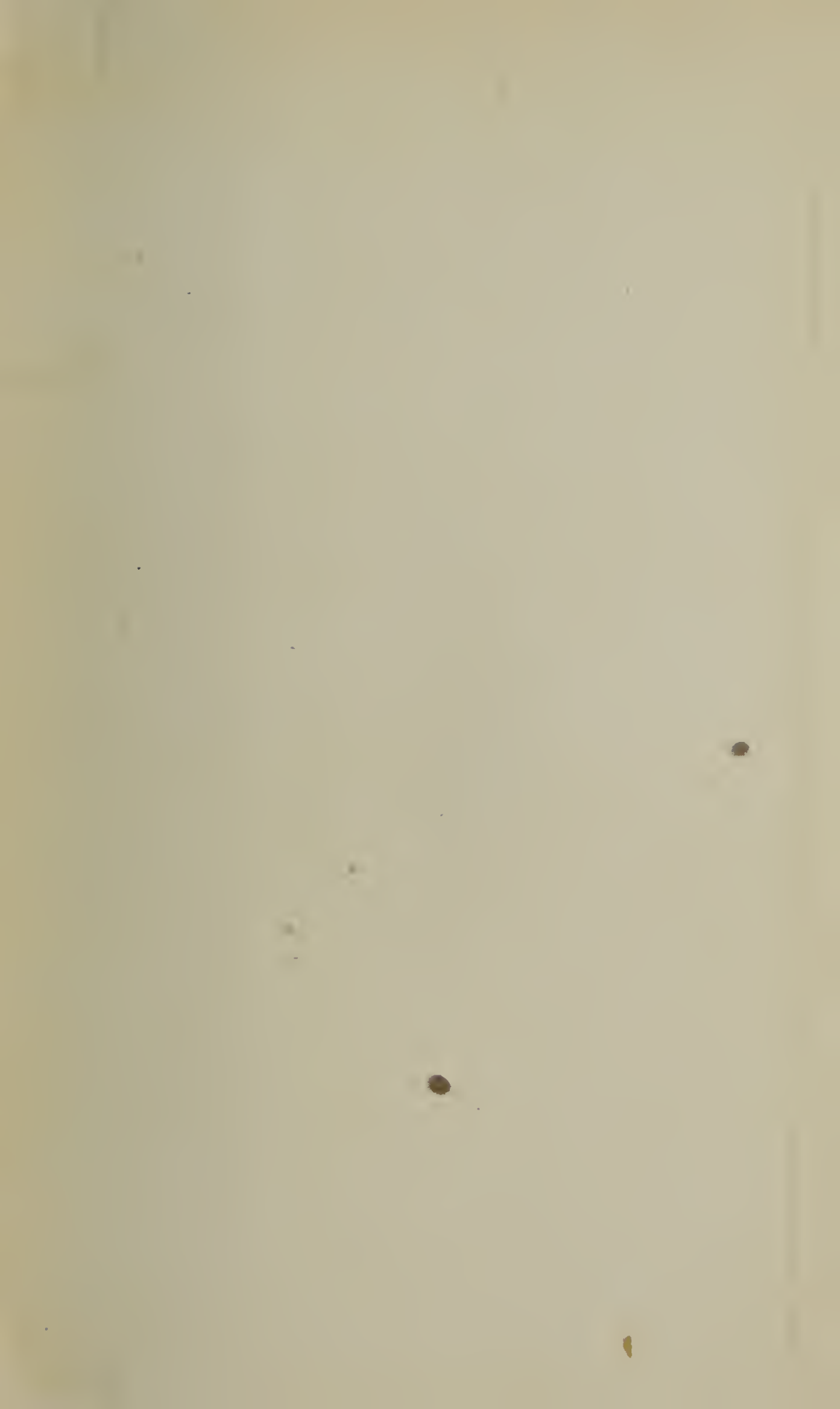
Special Notes.

The first burial in the Cemetery was on September 26th, 1864.

Additional names of Jews here in 1863 were Mr. Shane and family, Mr. Ph. Friedlander and family and Mr. Alexander and family.

Mr. Emmanuel Fels, for many years a resident of, and who died in Paducah, enlisted in the Confederate Army in Arkansas, and served with honor during the entire war. He was wounded at Murfreesboro, Tenn., was taken prisoner, but escaped.

Additional members of the original choir inaugurated by Rev. Leopold were: Mesdames Moses Adler, Henry Burgauer and Moses Kahn, and Miss Hannah Burbaum.



UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS-URBANA



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